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# STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

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## FARM WORK UP TO THE FAMILY

The number of persons working on farms March 1 was about 8,400,000. This was about 150,000 fewer than a year previous and was the smallest number in the 21 years of record. The number of hired workers was only about 1,500,000, down over 100,000 from a year previous - confirming the scarcity of hired help for farm work. The number of family workers was approximately 6,900,000, nearly as many as a year ago (only 40,000 less). It appears that farmers' families will have to do more of this year's farm work, at least up till harvest time, than has been the case any year since the records began.

## MARKETING CHARGES

Charges for marketing family basket of farm food products were \$219 in February, same as in January; include \$14 of Government payments to marketing agencies; marketing margin (\$205) was only 1 percent above 1935-39 prewar average, though total marketing charges were 9 percent higher than prewar.

Retail cost of the family market basket fell from \$455 in January to \$452 in February and payments to farmers for equivalent produce dropped from \$250 to \$247.

The farmer's share of the consumer's dollar spent for farm foods was 55 cents in February, same as in two preceding months and equalling record high reached in April 1918. Total marketing charges, including Government payments to marketing agencies, were 48 percent of the retail cost of the market basket during the 3 months December - February.

## FARM INCOME

Cash receipts from farm products sold in March estimated \$1,387 million, 3 percent below March 1944. February receipts \$1,343 million, same as year earlier. January-March total \$4,301 million, compared with \$4,312 million in January-March 1944. Receipts lower, compared with last year, from tobacco and livestock products.

## FARMERS PLANNING SOME CHANGES IN ACREAGE

If weather permits plantings up to farmers' intentions, as reported last month, the total crop acreage (364 million acres) will nearly come up to last year. The main reductions in acreage planned are corn 3 percent less, spring wheat 2 percent, barley 14 percent, potatoes

4 percent, sweet potatoes 8 percent, dry beans 11 percent, soybeans 2 percent, cowpeas 10 percent, peanuts 2 percent less. Crops of which increases are planned include: Oats 8 percent larger acreage, flaxseed 37 percent, rice 2 percent, sugar beets 20 percent, and tobacco 4 percent.

As will be seen, the main cuts in food crops are in spring wheat, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and beans. The total acreage of feed crops, under these plans, would be around 1.5 percent under 1944; but with average yields the production of four chief feed grains would be around 119 million tons, only about 2 million below 1944 and probably ample for the livestock. But the weather will decide the matter, finally.

## STOCKS OF GRAIN ON FARMS

Stocks of wheat on farms, April 1, estimated 239 million bushels, compared with 220 million a year ago and 10 year average (1933-42) stocks on that date of 163 million.

Rye stocks low, 6,673,000 bushels, against 8,890,000 last year and 24,000,000 in 1943.

Corn stocks on farms a near record, about 1,340 million bushels, 23 percent above last year and 35 percent above average. Stocks in Iowa and eastern corn belt States are lower than in recent years, but in western belt are very large. The generally large corn reserve makes the feed situation favorable for cattle and hogs.

Oats stocks 430 million bushels, about 15 million or 4 percent above year ago and compare with average stocks of 387 million bushels.

Barley stocks 87 million bushels, against 92 million last year and 111 million bushels, the 1940-43 average.

Soybean stocks 28 million bushels, against 40 million year ago and 54 million in 1943.

## GOOD WHEAT PROSPECT

Winter wheat crop estimated (April 1) at 863 million bushels, 100 million above the prospect last December and if borne out would be the largest winter wheat crop ever grown. It would be 100 million bushels larger than the winter crop of last year, and 37 million above the largest previous one of 1931. Growth is 2 to 3 weeks ahead of normal. Given a fairly good spring wheat crop, total wheat output this year will be large; however, the weather is always a decisive factor in crop yields.

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	FEB. 15 1945	MAR. 15 1945	MAR. 15 1945
Wheat, bu. . . . . dol.	1.47	1.48	1.53
Corn, bu. . . . . dol.	1.06	1.07	1.11
Oats, bu. . . . . dol.	.73	.74	.69
Cotton, lb. . . . . ct.	19.99	20.24	21.45
Potatoes, bu. . . . . dol.	1.65	1.71	1.25
Hogs, 100 lb. . . . . dol.	14.00	14.00	12.60
Beef cattle, 100 lb. . . dol.	12.10	12.30	9.38
Veal calves, 100 lb. . . dol.	13.60	13.70	11.70
Lambs, 100 lb. . . . . dol.	13.60	13.80	10.20
Butterfat, lb. . . . . ct.	50.8	50.7	46.2
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. . dol.	3.31	3.24	2.73
Chickens, live, lb. . . . ct.	24.5	25.0	19.7
Eggs, doz. . . . . ct.	35.8	33.1	31.2

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted for seasonal variation.



## MORE CATTLE ON FEED - HEAVY SLAUGHTER

Shipments of cattle and calves into 8 Corn Belt States for feeding were 24 percent larger this January than last; in February were 2 percent over year previous. Number cattle on feed January 1, in country as a whole, estimated 5 percent above year ago. Grain more plentiful than year ago in most of central region and western range cattle also fared well for feed.

Cattle slaughter in January and February set new records for those two months. February slaughter in comparable federally inspected plants was 2 percent above previous Feb. Inspected slaughter of calves, however, dropped off in February, being 7 percent below year previous.

Cold storage stocks of beef increased from 116 to 133 million pounds in February. Veal stocks March 1 were about the same as a month previous.

## MEAT

Meat purchases by non-civilians in 1944 equaled 25 percent of total production. Armed forces buying this year probably will be larger than last year; lend-lease less. Total meat production 1945 expected to be around 10 percent under 1944 record, most of decrease in pork. Most of the reduction in meat output will occur in first 9 months; next fall meat production probably will about equal last fall. General meat prospect for civilians is short supply at least through this summer.

Cold storage holdings of meat on March 1 totaled 592 million pounds, 26 million less than a month earlier and 19 million less than the previous record low for the month in 1936. Stocks declined during February, whereas they usually build up; were less than one-half as large as year ago.

## FEWER LAMBS; LESS WOOL

Early spring lamb crop estimated 6 percent under year previous, and smallest in 10 years; due to smaller number ewes bred for early lambing. With 6 percent reduction in total number of breeding ewes on farms, January 1, late lamb crop also will be under last year.

Number of stock sheep January 1 about 9 percent under year previous; means further decline in domestic wool crop. The record wool production was in 1942, about 392 million pounds; this year's shearing will be about 18 percent under 1942, if wool declines in same proportion as sheep. U. S. stocks of apparel wool, excluding stocks owned by British Government, estimated 750 million pounds on January 1 (greasy, shorn, and pulled), compared with 810 million year earlier. Carryover April 1 probably even smaller, compared with year ago.

## HEAVY MILK PRODUCTION

Milk production expected to be at least up to last year, 119 billion pounds. Number milk cows on farms at beginning of year '27, 785,000 head, 129,000 more than year previous. Daily milk production through February was 3 percent above year earlier. Production per cow March 1 was heaviest ever for date and number cows were near peak. Creamery butter production during January 98.5 million pounds, 5 percent under year earlier, and in the main central butter states was 7 percent less; during February was likewise running around 7 percent under year previous. Cheddar cheese output in January 51 million pounds, 8 million over year earlier but 11 million under January 1942. Cheese other than Cheddar 16 million pounds in January, compared with 18 million year before.

## POULTRY PRODUCTION DOWN SOMEWHAT

Number of laying hens on farms in February 409 million, compared with 445 million year earlier. Egg production during February averaged 14 million dozen per day, 8 percent below the daily average for February 1944. Total production of eggs this February 399 million dozen, compared with 450 million dozen year ago (but February 1944 had one more day). Eggs in storage, total shell and frozen, this February 2,801,000 cases, compared with 4,637,000 cases year ago. Total stocks of all poultry in cold storage in February 184 million pounds, compared with 221 million pounds year ago, being down about 17 percent.

## FEWER BABY CHICKS THIS SPRING

Some 15 percent fewer chicks were put out by commercial hatcheries during February than in same month last year. The number of baby chicks this February was about 108 million, against 123 million hatched a year previous. The demand for chicks for meat is much stronger than for laying stock replacement - in the areas where commercial broilers are largely produced, sale of baby chicks is limited only by the supply of hatching eggs, which is short.

## COTTON CONSUMPTION DOWN SLIGHTLY

Cotton consumption during February 781,559 bales, somewhat less than in other recent months; but consumption per working day averaged 39,740 bales, highest since November 1943.

For more detailed information, write the Division of Economic Information, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., or telephone Republic 4142 - Branch 4407.

## CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE

INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	MARCH 1945
Prices received by farmers . .	1910-14 = 100	198
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	173
Parity ratio . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	114
Wholesale prices of food . .	1910-14 = 100	162
Retail prices of food . . .	1910-14 = 100	<sup>1</sup> 176
Farm wage rates . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	324
Weekly factory earnings . .	1910-14 = 100	<sup>2</sup> 429
RATIOS	LONG-TIME MARCH - AVERAGE	MARCH 1945
Hog-corn ratio, U. S. . . .	12.8	13.1
Butterfat-feed ratio, U. S. .	24.6	26.2
Milk-feed ratio, U. S. . . .	1.23	1.46
Egg-feed ratio, U. S. . . .	10.3	11.5
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	JAN. - DEC. 1943	JAN. - DEC. 1944
Milk, (Bil. lb.) . . . . .	118.1	119.2
Eggs, (Bil.) . . . . .	54.2	57.5
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) . .	5,970	6,665
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	958	887
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.) . . .	12,161	12,698
All meats (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	19,686	21,166
<sup>1</sup> February figure.		
<sup>2</sup> Factory pay roll per employed worker.		
December figure.		